FY14 Quality Full-Day Grant Update (FC 701)

The Governor and the Legislature approved a budget in July 2013 that included approximately $23.9M for the Kindergarten Expansion Grants for FY14, resulting in level funding from FY13. Awards to grantees were allocated based on last year’s (FY 13) allocation, rather than on the number of full day kindergarten classrooms in operation. Grantees have received an email confirmation that their budgets have been posted.

News from NAEYC

Revised Guidance for Assessment—Effective October 1, 2013

Twice a year, the NAEYC Academy revises “Guidance for Assessment,” a supplement to NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria. Guidance both explains how the criteria are assessed by NAEYC and clarifies the intent of the criteria. Revised Guidance for Assessment – Effective October 1, 2013 provides programs with advance notice of important upcoming guidance changes.
Programs visited on and after October 1 will be assessed according to this revised guidance. To view revised guidance in context, visit TORCH or click "Standards & Criteria," then "Access Standards & Criteria."

**FY14 Transition to full-day Kindergarten Grant (FC702)**

Based on the FY13 state budget language, the Department offered districts with part-day kindergarten the opportunity to apply for funding to support the transition of one or more part-day classes to full-day kindergarten with support from the Transition to Full-Day Kindergarten Grant (FC702). The Department released the FY14 competitive grant July 26, 2013. This grant is intended to help districts with preparation needed during fiscal year 2014 (FY14) to open full-day classes in fiscal year 2015 (FY15). Seven districts were awarded the Transition to Full-Day Kindergarten grant, Billerica, Chelmsford, Hopkinton, Mansfield, North Attleborough, Scituate and Stoneham. Award details can be found on the Department’s Grant Awards and Kindergarten Grants web pages.

**Grant Amendments**

Several districts have already inquired about filing an amendment. If you need to amend the district’s FC 701 grant budget, amendments will be accepted through the end of May 2014, as needed. Details about the Department’s amendment process can be found on the Department’s Grants website.

The following two forms are necessary when submitting the amendment request:

- **Amendment Request Form**
  In section III, put your original budget items in Column A, the previously approved budget amendment amounts in Column B (if applicable), the proposed amount to increase or decrease each line in Column C, and the totals (revised budget amounts) for each line in Column D.

- **Budget Pages**
  Be sure of the following when working on the revision of the budget page:
  - Reflect the new amounts as listed in section III Column D of the Amendment Form
  - Revise the budget narrative to reflect the changes in the budget (including descriptions of the proposed changes).
  - Provide number of staff and FTEs in Lines 1-3, and rates if used for stipends.
  - Provide rates for consultants, etc. in Line 5.

Send three sets of the forms (at least one set having an original signature) to the Department, ATTN: Mary Jane Crotty, LSS Unit (see top of newsletter for mail, email, and fax information). Once LSS approves the amendment, an original set is required for the grants office; one set gets mailed back to the districts, and one set is kept in the program files.

**Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA)**

The Department is collaborating with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) through EEC’s Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant funds, on the development and
implementation of a Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA). This initiative is focused on producing a common statewide measure of children’s school readiness, and helping teachers to use the assessment data to guide curriculum and instruction in order to implement the state learning standards.

From the experience of the first year of the project, state agency partners and local districts see the MKEA as an important opportunity for teachers’ professional development on the importance of formative assessment and observation as critical elements of early childhood teaching. The data collected will address all developmental domains, including social-emotional development and physical development, and provides teachers with a comprehensive understanding of the child’s development and learning. The results of the assessment are intended to guide better curriculum planning and instructional practices to implement the state curriculum standards, meet children’s needs, and to have better communication with parents.

The Department sees the MKEA and its focus on formative assessment as being well-aligned with other national and state initiatives, including:

- NAEYC accreditation standards;
- the creation of professional development goals through the teacher evaluation system;
- efforts to improve Grade 3 Reading and Math scores;
- on-going initiatives to address the development and learning of children with disabilities (Office of Special Education Programs – Indicator 7: Measuring Children’s Outcomes);
- language development of English language learners through World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA – see more information below); and
- PARCC K-2 assessment

Given the importance of formative assessment in the early years, the Department made participation in the MKEA a requirement of the FY14 Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant. While grant districts could volunteer to begin participation in Year 1 (FY13) or Year 2 (FY14), the expectation is that all Quality Full-Day Kindergarten grantees will be part of the MKEA Year 3 (FY15).

Communication with districts that will begin participation in Year 3 (FY15) will be forthcoming from EEC. We anticipate that planning meetings and professional development will begin in late winter/early spring.

**Formative Assessment in the Early Childhood Classroom**

On October 7, 2013, EEC and ESE jointly sponsored a one-day conference on *Formative Assessment in the Early Childhood Classroom*. As part of the MKEA initiative, this professional development opportunity was intended to engage administrators, kindergarten teachers and instructional assistants in a dialogue about the importance of observation being a part of early childhood teaching.

Stephanie Cox Suarez, Executive Director of Wheelock College’s Documentation Studio, was the plenary speaker colleagues from Wheelock, Tufts and Boston Public Schools facilitated workshops to further the dialogue about how to conduct observation and use observation data to understand children’s development and learning, inform instructional supports and engage
families. The presentations and other resources on observation can be found at the conference’s website.

We look forward to continuing this dialogue through future professional development.

**Kindergarten Regional Networking Meetings**

*Winter 2013 Kindergarten Networking Meetings*

The Department will be hosting three regional networking meetings in Salem, Plymouth and Worcester.

- Monday, January 6, Salem State University (9am-2pm)
- Friday, January 10, Fall River Public Schools (9am-2pm)
- Monday, January 13, Worcester Public Library (9:30am-2:30pm)

The agenda for this winter’s meetings will cover, but not be limited to, a discussion on efforts to develop a robust set of standards in the domains of social-emotional development and approaches toward play and learning. In addition, time will be set aside for continued discussions related to the MKEA. As always, we will be sure to have time for districts to receive updates from the Department and to network with one another.

The online registration is now open. Please register by noon on January 3, 2014. We will send final meeting details to all who register.

**Updates on Department Initiatives**

*Revised Standards for Science & Technology/Engineering*

The Department has been part of a consortium of states working with Next Generation Science to consider a revised set of standards for our state’s Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework for K-12. As part of this effort, EEC has partnered with ESE and Wheelock College to develop preschools standards that will align with K-12, once adopted. The revised preschool standards for Science and Technology/Engineering were presented to EEC’s Board at its October meeting. The goal is to have a PK-12 Curriculum Framework that incorporates the new standards.

The K-12 standards were presented to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in October and will be available for public review during the fall and winter of 2013. The following is the schedule for public review, final drafting and implementation:
Public comment draft of revised standards presented to the BESE  
Fall 2013

Phase 4: Public comment and editing of the draft revised standards  
Fall 2013 - Winter 2013

Final draft of standards presented to BESE  
Winter 2013 - 2014

Dissemination of standards; district curriculum adjustment and implementation; MCAS updated  
Winter 2014 through School year 2015 - 2016

**Educator Evaluation Systems**

**MA Model**

On June 28, 2011, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted new regulations for the evaluation of all Massachusetts educators. The regulations, which apply to both administrators and teachers throughout the state, are designed to:

- Promote growth and development amongst leaders and teachers,
- Place student learning at the center, using multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement,
- Recognize excellence in teaching and leading,
- Set a high bar for professional teaching status, and
- Shorten timelines for improvement.

The Department’s [Educator Evaluation](#) webpage provides a number of resources related to our state’s Educator Evaluation Framework, including the model, information on district determined measures and training opportunities.

**Educator Evaluation Systems for Teachers of Young Children**

A number of national organizations are developing resources related to educator evaluation systems and more specifically, use of these systems with teachers of young children. Some examples include:

Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation (University of North Carolina at Charlotte) has developed a [Resource Manual for Administrators and Principals Supervising and Evaluating Teachers of Young Children](#).

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) recently published a document called *Using Alternative Growth Measures for Evaluating Teacher Performance: What the Literature Says*.

The U.S. Department of Education has also published a report called *Targeting Growth: Using Student Learning Objectives as a Measure of Educator Effectiveness*.

We will continue to keep you updated as resources related to educator evaluation systems unfold.
English Language Learners

As you know the Department is part of a consortium of states designing and utilizing a framework that supports educators in helping English language learners (K-12) access the curriculum and its content. In alignment with that work, Massachusetts and other states from across the country have engaged WIDA in the development of an English language development framework for educators working with English language learners from infancy up to kindergarten.

WIDA has developed an Early English Language Development (E-ELD) and Early Spanish Language Development (E-SLD) framework and is beginning to disseminate information on these frameworks broadly. A series of webinar opportunities on WIDA's new E-ELD and E-SLD Standards were offered this fall. For more information on the E-ELD and E-SLD Standards, including the link for the last webinar, please visit [http://www.wida.us/standards/eeld.aspx](http://www.wida.us/standards/eeld.aspx).

- Playing with Language: Understanding and Using the Model Performance Indicator (MPI) Strands

  *Tuesday, January 14, 2014, 3:00-4:00 p.m. Central Time*

New Initiatives from the Department of Early Education and Care

Early Education and Care Alignment Study

As part of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTTT-ELC), EEC commissioned a 4 part report authored by Sharon Lynn Kagan, Catherine Scott-Little and colleagues related to the alignment of our state’s early learning standards. The report has four parts:

- An alignment of the breadth and depth of our early learning standards from infancy through kindergarten; a [power point presentation](http://www.wida.us/standards/eeld.aspx) from Sharon Lynn Kagan and Jeanne Reid, two of the report’s authors, to the Board of Early Education and Care can be found on EEC’s website;
- An alignment between our preschool early learning standards, the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (HSCDELF) and preschool assessment tools (Work Sampling, Gold, and COR);
- An alignment between our kindergarten early learning standards and kindergarten assessment tools used in the MKEA initiative (Work Sampling and Gold); and
- A summary of findings and recommendations from the above three reports.

When the reports are finalized and available online, we will send the links.
New Initiatives from the Executive Office of Education

National Governor’s Association (NGA) Early Childhood Policy Academy

The Executive Office of Education was the recipient of the National Governor’s Association Policy Academy grant in June 2013. The purpose of the $25,000 grant award is to develop a birth-third grade policy agenda. The Departments of Early Education and Care, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Higher Education are working together to strengthen and align birth to grade three standards and assessments with an emphasis on social-emotional and approaches to learning standards.

Professional Resources

Center on the Developing Child

Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO)

One of 22 Comprehensive Centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) has been funded to strengthen the capacity of State Education Agencies (SEAs) to lead sustained improvements in early learning opportunities and outcomes. CEELO will work in partnership with SEAs, state and local early childhood leaders, and other federal and national technical assistance (TA) providers to promote innovation and accountability.

Their website contains early childhood resources related to: Assessment, Child Outcomes, Data, Birth to Grade 3, Workforce, and Systems Development.

Child Development Foundation

National Associate for the Education of Young Children

NAEYC recently released a position statement on the Common Core State Standards and early childhood education.

National Institute for Early Education Research

NIEER is a great resource for both research and national efforts to strengthen the delivery and quality of early childhood education programs and services. The website provides the latest research in addition to policy briefs, presentations and other useful resources.

P-Grade 3

Kristie Kauerz and Julia Coffman recently published an evaluation framework for PreK-3rd grade initiatives. The Framework, entitled Framework for Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Pre-K Grade Approaches helps to address key questions facing those who are developing PreK-3rd grade approaches in their schools, districts, and communities:
What does a comprehensive PreK-3rd grade approach include?
The word 'alignment' is used often; but what needs to be aligned?
What kinds of changes need to take hold in adults' behaviors before we can expect to see improvements in child outcomes?
What kinds of responsibilities need to be shared among 0-5 programs, grades K-3, families, and communities?

In addition, the tool provides a clear and comprehensive framework in the following areas:

- Governance
- Strategic Plans
- Funding
- Visible Leadership
- Foster Teamwork
- Instructional Leadership
- Focus on Instruction
- Visible Practice
- Work as Teams
- Standards
- Curricula
- Assessments
- Culturally Inclusive
- Promote Relationships
- Structure to Support Diverse Learners
- Child-Based Data
- School/program-Based Data
- Core Priorities
- 2-way Communication
- Shared Leadership/Decision-Making
- Access and Continuity of Services
- PreK-3rd Grade Pathway

The framework not only provides what these indicators might look like at an implementation level (Example Implementation Indicators) but also provides programs and state level organizations with Self-Assessment/Depth of Implementation and Alignment Indicators by which communities can self-reflect on their PreK-3rd systems. Lastly, the framework provides examples of evaluation approaches that can be used to measure the effectiveness of the communities’ PreK-3rd Infrastructure.

**Playground Safety**

The Massachusetts Department of [Public Health’s website](https://www.mass.gov) contains some useful information on playground safety. In addition to NAEYC Accreditation criteria for Outdoor Playground Equipment, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) also has a website on [Playground Safety](https://www.nrpa.org) with some useful information.

**Society for Research on Child Development (SRCD)**

The inclusion of social-emotional learning in state’s standards framework is gaining increasing attention. Stephanie Jones and Suzanne Bouffard (Harvard Education Graduate School of Education, 2012) published an article in SRCD on the importance of these social and emotional learning in schools. The article is called, [Social and Emotional Learning in Schools: From Programs to Strategies](https://www.srcd.org) and can be found on the SRCD website.